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Nauruan Police Arrest Asylum Seeker On Trumped Up Charges

Nauruan police have arrested a 39 year-old Iranian asylum seeker, Hamid Nadaf, on trumped up charges of “threatening behaviour.”

Hamid was arrested on Friday afternoon, 3 June, around 4pm, near the family compound RPC3, and is now being held in the Nauru jail.

Hamid, his wife and eight year-old son have been in detention on Nauru since February 2014, and he has played a very active role in the daily protests in the Nauru family compound RPC3, since 20 March this year.

The police refused to allow Hamid’s wife to see him yesterday, Saturday, 4 June and have told his wife that he will be held and brought before the court on 13 June.

Asylum seekers and refugees on the island see his arrest as a clear case of victimisation and an attempt to stifle the daily protests that have spread to refugee compounds across the island. Today will be the 78th day of protest in the family camp. (Photo of Saturday’s protest, 77 days, in the family camp attached.)

Protests on Nauru yesterday declared that Hamid was innocent and called for his release. (Videos available on request.)

Police say they are acting on a complaint by a Nauruan citizen who felt ‘threatened’ when they read the contents of a letter that supposedly fell from Hamid’s pocket when he was riding a motor-bike on Friday.

The supposed letter has not been disclosed and in any case Hamid is not able to write in English.

Hamid’s arrest seems to be part of new police tactic to intimidate the protests, now that “attempting suicide” is no longer a criminal offence.

An Iraqi man was arrested, in similar circumstances to Hamid’s, on 6 May, on the basis of a complaint to Nauruan police that the man had made threats to “set fire” or ‘make an explosion’ on Nauru.

“Hamid’s arrest has angered asylum seekers and refugees on the island and has ensured the protests will grow louder and spread further,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition.

“It has also exposed the lack of the rule of law on Nauru, with the police acting as an unaccountable extension of the Nauruan and Australian governments. Hamid and the Iraqi man should be freed immediately.”

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